

5     **WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. An acidified starch comprising:  
from about 0.0001 to about 0.01 weight percent high-intensity sweetener; and  
an amount of food grade acid effective for providing a pH of 4.6 or less.  
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2. The acidified starch of claim 1 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is  
selected from the group consisting of sucralose, aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame-K,  
cyclamate and mixtures thereof.
- 15     3. The acidified starch of claim 2 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is  
sucralose.
4. The acidified starch of claim 1 wherein the food grade acid is selected from  
the group consisting of lactic acid, citric acid, phosphoric acid, fumaric acid, malic  
20     acid, tartaric acid, acetic acid, propionic acid and mixtures thereof.
5. The acidified starch of claim 4 wherein the food grade acid is lactic acid.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein the starch is selected from the group  
25     consisting of pasta, rice, potato products and mixtures thereof.
7. The method of claim 6 wherein the starch is pasta.
8. A method of preparing an acidified starch comprising:  
30     forming a dough by combining flour with a water composition in an amount  
effective for providing 0.0001 to 0.005 weight percent high-intensity sweetener, based  
on a total weight of the dough;  
forming the dough into desired shapes;  
cooking the dough; and  
35     contacting the cooked dough with an aqueous composition that includes a food  
grade acid.

- 5            9. The method of claim 6 wherein the aqueous composition includes an amount of food grade acid effective for providing a starch having a pH of 4.6 or less.
10. The method of claim 8 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is selected from the group consisting of sucralose, aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame-K,  
10 cyclamate and mixtures thereof.
11. The method of claim 10 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is sucralose.
12. The method of claim 8 wherein the food grade acid is selected from the  
15 group consisting of lactic acid, citric acid, phosphoric acid, fumaric acid, malic acid, tartaric acid, acetic acid, propionic acid, and mixtures thereof.
13. The method of claim 12 wherein the food grade acid is lactic acid.
- 20            14. The method of claim 8 wherein the starch is selected from the group consisting of pasta, rice, potato products and mixtures thereof.
15. The method of claim 14 wherein the starch is pasta.
- 25            16. A method of preparing an acidified starch comprising:  
             forming a dough by combining flour with a water composition in an amount effective for 0.0001 to about 0.005 weight percent high-intensity sweetener, based on a total weight of the dough;  
             forming the dough into desired shapes; and  
30            cooking the dough in an aqueous composition that includes a food grade acid.
17. The method of claim 16 wherein the aqueous composition includes an amount of food grade acid effective for providing a starch having a pH of 4.6 or less.
- 35            18. The method of claim 16 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is selected from the group consisting of sucralose, aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame-K, cyclamate and mixtures thereof.

- 5 19. The method of claim 18 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is sucralose.
20. The method of claim 16 wherein the food grade acid is selected from the group consisting of lactic acid, citric acid, phosphoric acid, fumaric acid, malic acid, tartaric acid, acetic acid, propionic acid and mixtures thereof.
- 10 21. The method of claim 20 wherein the food grade acid is lactic acid.
22. The method of claim 16 wherein the starch is selected from the group consisting of pasta, rice, potato products and mixtures thereof.
- 15 23. The method of claim 22 wherein the starch is pasta.
24. A method for reducing acidic flavor in acidified starch, the method comprising contacting a cooked starch with a blend of food grade acid and high-
- 20 intensity sweetener.
25. The method of claim 24 wherein the blend of food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener includes 0.005 to 0.2 weight percent high-intensity sweetener, based on the total weight of the blend.
- 25 26. The method of claim 25 wherein the blend of food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener includes 0.01 to 0.1 weight percent high-intensity sweetener, based on the total weight of the blend.
- 30 27. The method of claim 24 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is selected from the group consisting of sucralose, aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame-K, cyclamate and mixtures thereof.
28. The method of claim 27 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is sucralose.
- 35 29. The method of claim 24 wherein the blend of food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener includes includes an amount of food grade acid effective for providing a starch having a pH of 4.6 or less.

5           30. The method of claim 24 wherein the food grade acid is selected from the group consisting of lactic acid, citric acid, phosphoric acid, fumaric acid, malic acid, tartaric acid, acetic acid, propionic acid and mixtures thereof.

10           31. The method of claim 30 wherein the food grade acid is lactic acid.

          32. The method of claim 24 wherein the starch is selected from the group consisting of pasta, rice, potato products and mixtures thereof.

15           33. The method of claim 32 wherein the starch is pasta.

          34. The method of claim 24 wherein the blend of food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener is contacted with the cooked starch in a coating drum for 1 to 7 minutes.

20           35. The method of claim 34 wherein the blend of food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener is contacted with the cooked starch in a coating drum for 3 to 5 minutes.

25           36. A method for preparing an acidified starch, the method comprising contacting starch with an aqueous solution of a food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener for a time and temperature effective for cooking the starch.

30           37. The method of claim 36 wherein the starch is cooked at a temperature of from about 90°C to about 100°C for at least about 3 minutes.

          38. The method of claim 36 wherein the aqueous solution includes about 0.005 to about 0.2 weight percent high-intensity sweetener, based on the total weight of the aqueous solution.

35           39. The method of claim 38 wherein the aqueous solution includes about 0.01 to about 0.1 weight percent high-intensity sweetener, based on the total weight of the aqueous solution.

- 5           40. The method of claim 36 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is selected from the group consisting of sucralose, aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame-K, cyclamate and mixtures thereof.
- 10           41. The method of claim 40 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is sucralose.
42. The method of claim 36 wherein the aqueous solution of food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener includes includes an amount of food grade acid effective for providing a starch having a pH of 4.6 or less.
- 15           43. The method of claim 36 wherein the food grade acid is selected from the group consisting of lactic acid, citric acid, phosphoric acid, fumaric acid, malic acid, tartaric acid, acetic acid, propionic acid and mixtures thereof.
44. The method of claim 43 wherein the food grade acid is lactic acid.
- 20           45. The method of claim 36 wherein the starch is selected from the group consisting of pasta, rice, potato products and mixtures thereof.
46. The method of claim 45 wherein the starch is pasta.
- 25           47. A method of preparing an acidified starch product, the method comprising:  
            preparing the dough;  
            cooking the dough;  
            introducing an effective amount of a food grade acid into the dough or cooked  
30   dough; and  
            introducing an effective amount of a high intensity sweetener into the dough or cooked dough;  
            wherein the effective amount of food grade acid and high intensity sweetener is effective for providing an acidified starch product having microbial stability and  
35   without objectionable acid flavor.
48. The method of claim 47 wherein the amount of food grade acid is effective for providing a pH of 4.6 or less.

- 5            49. The method of claim 47 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is selected from the group consisting of sucralose, aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame-K, cyclamate and mixtures thereof.

10            50. The method of claim 49 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is sucralose.

             51. The method of claim 50 wherein the food grade acid is selected from the group consisting of lactic acid, citric acid, phosphoric acid, fumaric acid, malic acid, tartaric acid, acetic acid, propionic acid, and mixtures thereof.

15            52. The method of claim 51 wherein the food grade acid is lactic acid.

             53. The method of claim 47 wherein the starch is selected from the group consisting of pasta, rice, potato products and mixtures thereof.

20            54. The method of claim 53 wherein the starch is pasta.